

UTA-86-2

OPPRESSION AND PERSECUTION OF
THE TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA

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ISSUE BRIEF

From late 1984 to January 1985, the Bulgarian government conducted a gunpoint assimilation campaign to force the Turkish minority to change their Turkish/Muslim names to Bulgarian/Slavic names. During this campaign, Bulgarian security forces committed detention, rape, and murder. Attempts to escape were met with force. In addition, travel into and out of ethnic Turkish areas was restricted. Following this period, the Bulgarian government has been continuing its campaign to assimilate its Turkish minority using its militia and paramilitary units to enforce curfews, conduct arrests and interrogations, and imprison ethnic Turks. The ultimate goal of the campaign is to destroy step by step the national, cultural, and religious existence of the Turkish minority. According to reports, the Bulgarian government has attempted to restrict the movement of population in ethnic Turkish areas. A fine has been imposed on any citizen who speaks Turkish. Bulgarian authorities have increased efforts to deny access to certain ethnic Turkish villages to diplomats and journalists. For example, the village of Yablonovo remains closed to Western observers. Numerous ethnic Turks have been imprisoned at the Danube Island prison camp, Belene, and at prisons in the towns of Sliven and Stara Zagora. Coupled with efforts to assimilate the ethnic Turkish minority, the Bulgarian government has stepped up its propaganda campaign against the Muslim religion. Numerous articles have appeared in regional newspapers attacking Muslim beliefs, customs, and religious practices. Some excerpts from the world press which narrate the plight of the Turkish minority are provided in Annex I. Since Bulgaria does not allow access by members of the free press, Western diplomats, or other foreigners to the regions where atrocities have taken place, the actual gravity of the events is not adequately reflected in the world media.

Mr. Stanko Todorov of the Bulgarian Politburo confirmed in his statement in the Turkish village of Novachevo in early March 1985 that the name change campaign was systematic:

"At the end of 1984 and the beginning of 1985, a process was carried out with a new force spontaneously and comprehensively restoring the Bulgarian names of our compatriots who had Turkish-Arabic names. This process was concluded in the whole country in two or three months."

Bulgarian authorities at first denied that any "Bulgarization" effort was being undertaken. Later, they claimed a process of "voluntary readoption" of Slavic names was underway. In addition, they ruled out any negotiations with Turkey or any emigration of Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin to Turkey. They further claimed any demonstration of concern over the situation in Bulgaria constitutes illegitimate intervention in the internal affairs of Bulgaria. This claim is totally irrelevant. Until recently, Bulgarian statesmen and Bulgarian documents spoke of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. The ethnic Turks in Bulgaria have official minority status. There are bilateral and multilateral agreements on this subject to which Bulgaria is a party. In addition, such an approach to ethnic minorities runs directly counter to the spirit as well as the letter of the Helsinki Final Act. Moreover, the Turkish governments have always been interested in the Turks living in Bulgaria for humanitarian considerations. This interest of the Turkish governments is also based on the Treaty of Friendship between Turkey and Bulgaria signed on October 18, 1925. In fact, the Bulgarian government is already aware of the views of the Turkish government on this matter, and the situation of the Turks

living in Bulgaria has always been a subject for discussion between the two countries. Indeed, there have been immigrations to Turkey as a result of two previous agreements reached with Bulgaria. The recent Bulgarian claims that the Treaty of Turkish-Bulgarian Friendship of October 18, 1925, mentions not the Turks in Bulgaria, but only the Muslim minority, are also irrelevant. Indeed, Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Turkish-Bulgarian Convention on Establishment concluded in Ankara on the same date is as follows:

"Both contracting parties have agreed not to obstruct in any way optional emigration of Turks in Bulgaria and Bulgarians in Turkey."

Therefore, contrary to Bulgarian claims, it was established through this Convention concluded the same day that the Muslim minority in Bulgaria consists in fact of Turks. It is evident that Bulgaria is violating her contractual obligations in bad faith and makes a mockery of the principle *pacta sunt servanda*, a fundamental principle of international law and order. Bulgaria now resorts to a ruse by simply classifying the whole ethnic Turkish minority as ethnic Bulgarians and claiming that there is no minority in their country. Further information on treaties and other international documents that determine the legal status of the Turks in Bulgaria is provided in Annex II.

Some excerpts from speeches of a number of high-level Bulgarian officials which contain Bulgarian claims are presented in Annex III.

In order to find a humanitarian solution to the suffering of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, Turkey has already proposed to that country to discuss at the Foreign Minister level all questions including the immigration of the Turkish minority, but the Bulgarian government has not responded to this proposal positively. Therefore, the Turkish government had to raise this issue in international fora. For instance, the issue was taken up at the Meeting of Experts on Human Rights as a follow-up of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Ottawa, Canada, between May 7 and June 17, 1985. In 1985, the matter was also discussed at the Council of Europe in July, at the Tenth Anniversary Meeting of CSCE in Helsinki, Finland, at the beginning of August, the 23rd Session of the General Conference of the UNESCO in Sofia, Bulgaria, between October 8 and November 12, and at the Cultural Forum (CSCE) in Budapest between October 15 and November 25. A resolution condemning strongly the brutal acts of violence and systematic suppression perpetrated by the Bulgarian authorities against the Turkish minority was adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on September 26, 1985. A similar resolution was adopted by the North Atlantic (NATO) Assembly in October 1985. Texts of these resolutions are given in Annex IV. The matter was also taken up in national parliaments including the Congress of the United States, and a joint resolution condemning the brutal treatment by the Bulgarian government was submitted to both the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States in April 1985. This joint resolution, the text of which is provided in Annex V, is expected to be voted on in 1986.

It is our firm belief that the irresponsible policies of the Bulgarian government must be a continuous concern of the whole society of nations as well as of the world public opinion including mass media and human rights organizations, because the common voice of humanity must be raised against inhuman acts and against violations of human rights and violations wherever and whenever they occur.

We appreciate that the United States government has already declared that it will continue to express its concern in bilateral contacts with the Bulgarian government and take every opportunity to focus international attention on this serious problem. Excerpts of some of these statements are presented in Annex VI.

The world community has not failed to judge severely the oppressive policies of the Bulgarian government whose prestige in the world has already suffered extensively from widespread reports of Bulgarian active involvement in international terrorism, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling.

The truth remains that as long as Bulgaria fails to reverse its policies against the Turkish Muslim minority or to allow the world press to see for itself the real situation in the country, Bulgaria will continue to be a government pursuing racist and oppressive policies in violation of the United Nations Charter, international instruments on human rights, and bilateral treaties.

ANNEX I

**THE WORLD PRESS ON THE BULGARIAN OPPRESSION
AGAINST THE TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA**

Associated Press (January 17, 1985)

"Ethnic Turks, resisting official pressure to take Bulgarian names have battled authorities in the southeastern part of the country, and dozens of deaths have been rumored, foreign diplomats in Sofia said. No confirmed casualty figures were available...

"One analyst said he had heard reports of at least 40 deaths in recent weeks...

"It's difficult to pin down because in a closed society, rumors tend to feed on themselves. So they are all unconfirmed. But there definitely is a problem, he said...

"Most of the fighting has been in the Haskovo region, about 70 kilometers north of the Greek and Turkish borders, according to the reports in Sofia. The area is home to a large part of the Turkish minority."

The New York Times (January 17, 1985)

"...Official attempts to get minority ethnic Turks to assume Bulgarian first names have led to violent disturbances in this country, diplomats said today.

"The Communist authorities denied that such disturbances had occurred, saying the reports were invented. But accounts from diplomats say there have been casualties, including deaths, among Turks resisting police demands that they adopt Bulgarian names..."

The Washington Times (January 18, 1985)

"Ethnic Turks, resisting official pressure to take Bulgarian names, have battled authorities in the southeastern part of the country and there are rumors of dozens of deaths, foreign diplomats in Sofia said.

"No confirmed casualty figures were available, although there seems to be a heavily increased militia presence in the region, one source said."

The Guardian (January 18, 1985)

"One source with direct access to predominantly Turkish areas said soldiers and police were surrounding villages at night, then going door to door passing out forms for residents to change their Turkish names to Bulgarian ones.

"If they do this, the problem is solved,' he said. 'If they refuse, they are threatened and beaten'..."

Reuters (January 23, 1985)

"Bulgaria has indefinitely banned Turkish tourists from entering the country because of Turkish press coverage which the Bulgarians described as hostile..."

"The decision was announced by Bulgarian tourist authorities in a telegram to Istanbul travel agencies, blaming press reports 'hostile to Bulgaria'..."

Newsday (January 23, 1985)

"...Government forces have cordoned off a 500-square-mile swath of border territory, where ethnic Turks physically fought the name-change campaign. Reports filtering out of the area set the number of deaths from 40 to 160 - the figures cannot be officially confirmed.

"The situation confronts Bulgaria's rigid communist regime with its first active resistance in decades.

"This week militiamen refused entry at two roadblocks on opposite edges of the mountainous zone to the first western reporters to reach the area since violence broke out in December.

"A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Lyobomir Shopoy, called reports of forceable name changing a 'sheer fabrication.' In a statement released last night, he said Bulgaria's 'broadly democratic laws' treat all citizens equally and guarantee each a right 'to choose for himself a name, and to change it if he so wishes.'

"As to the roadblocks, Shopoy said seasonal conditions make they 'something normal in winter.'

"One young resident of the isolated sector told reporters that police converged there last fall and began forcing Slavic names on ethnic Turks.

"'There is no more Turkish' he said. 'It is finished.'

"Reporters seeking to reach the area were turned back by police. But the journalists encountered one Bulgarian Turk from inside the area who agreed to talk about events there on condition that identifying details be withheld.

"The man, a resident of Kardzali Province in his early 20s, said police came to his home within the last month, demanded his identity card, then gave him a slip of paper with his new Bulgarian name.

"He pulled the paper from his pocket and shook it in the air. The new name was handwritten in ink, along with the date and the imprint of an official rubber stamp.

"He said the police filled out a change-of-name petition for him, to be filed with local authorities. When he balked at signing it, he said, a policeman grabbed him by the back of the neck and demanded his signature.

"His parents have been renamed, as have most ethnic Turks there, he said, lamenting that the Turkish identity is finished.

"'You take my name and I am dead, he said.'..."

The Sunday Times (February 17, 1985)

"...In a recent bloody incident which came to light last week, tanks invaded the town of Yoblonovo at the eastern end of the Balkan mountain range in the early hours of January 12. The town was then sealed off by government militia...

"The 1800 Turkish townsfolk had met before the raid and decided to resist the name changing operation, which has been mounted to minimize the size of the Turkish minority in Bulgarian census results later this year. When asked to sign documents to take on Bulgarian names, the people refused.

"According to a reliable eye witness, some 30 Turks were machine-gunned. After the shooting, the troops brought in bulldozers and explosives and leveled the houses of those who refused to cooperate, some of the homes with their residents still inside them...

"The Yoblonovo incident is only one of many reports of violence received by Western diplomats who believe the death toll has reached 500...

"Diplomats in Sofia believe that the authorities may have been spurred into the latest drastic action by deep concern at the Turkish population's rate of increase. Many Turkish schools have been closed and Turkish language courses have been ended. Islamic holidays and traditional ceremonies are banned. Mosques have been closed and only those of historic interest have survived demolition. Separate Muslim cemeteries have been closed..."

Tanjug (February 21, 1985)

"Reports on the unrests in the Rhodope and border regions of Bulgaria, i.e., on the resistance of the Turkish minority there, have not come as a surprise.

"This is written in the latest issue of the *Yugoslav Review of International Affairs*, which notes that 'the invisible war' as former Bulgarian Minister of the Interior Anton Jugov described relations between the Bulgarian government and Turkish minority, started back in the first months of the fatherland front's government.

"That war included emigration, assimilation (official recognition of Bulgarian personal names alone), the closing down of Mosques (all 1320 of them, except the one in Sofia), and bloody unrests.

"In spite of a well organized wall of silence, reports leaked out that, for example, a larger number of Turks was killed in unrests back in 1971. The last larger unrests took place in 1981 when, according to an official statement, 7 'Turkish bandits' were killed...

"The *Review of International Affairs* writes that the *Bulgarian Encyclopedia*, an edition of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, cites that the majority of population in Bulgaria 'are free from religious and similar fallacies'.

"At the last Bulgarian Community Party Central Committee plenum a decision was taken to 'accelerate the process of formation of homogenous Socialist Bulgarian nation.'

"In the explanation of the need for 'accelerating' this new wave of assimilation of the Turkish (and Macedonian) minority, the Central Committee said that nationality, as an element of the transcended bourgeois society, is a residue of the past.

"This residue will, through the purification and homogenization of the population, completely disappear and develop into a united Bulgarian Socialist nation, says the Central Committee.

"Those well acquainted with the situation in Bulgaria say that the latest unrests surprised the Bulgarian leadership who actually wanted only to implement 'without delay' the mentioned decisions of the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee plenum, writes the *Review of International Affairs*."

The Christian Science Monitor (February 22, 1985)

"Since early January, public concern in Turkey has mounted over a flood of newspaper reports about oppression of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria...

"The heart of Turkish concern is fear that Bulgaria aims to deprive its growing Turkish minority of both their religious and cultural heritages...

"More recently, clashes with police and troops in several towns with sizable Turkish populations have been confirmed by Western diplomatic sources. The Turkish government undoubtedly well informed on them. Sources in the Turkish capital, Ankara, confirm that the immediate cause of the clashes has been a Bulgarian campaign to force Turks to change both their first and family names to Slavic forms. Such changes entail, in effect, abandoning traditional Muslim names for Christian ones. But why such a preoccupation with names?

"It is a symptom of a much more serious problem,' says Prof. Aydin Yalcin of Ankara University. 'The truth is that the Bulgarian Communist regime faces the same embarrassing predicament as its big brother in Moscow: A Muslim population that is increasing three or four times as fast as the Slavs.'

"Rand Corporation analyst Alex Alexiev, himself a former Bulgarian, notes that Sofia stopped publishing nationality data in census returns in 1965.

"(Some) 656,000 Turks were counted in the 1955 census even though 150,000 had been forced to emigrate to Turkey in the early 1950s. This reduction was more than made good by their high birth rate, which was also true of the Pomaks (Slavic Muslims) and Gypsies. The Sofia regime tried to cover up the situation by simply classifying everyone as Bulgarian.'

"The Turkish minority in Bulgaria is now conservatively estimated at 10 percent of a population that is probably slightly over nine million. A census scheduled later this year could, if Turks and other Muslims were actually counted as such, reveal a much greater imbalance. An article last year in the *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (which appears at the University of Jedda) by Halit Molla Huseyn projects historic demographic trends to conclude that the total Muslim population of Bulgaria may be approaching two million.

"Sofia's tampering with names and numbers may have produced a situation where even Bulgaria's Communist rulers have no clear idea how many Muslim citizens they have. There are many indications that Turks and other Muslims in Bulgaria long rural and

politically passive, have been experiencing the same kind of resurgents of self-awareness that has affected Muslims everywhere during the past decade.

"In addition they have frequent contact with Turks who travel through Bulgaria, one million strong each year, to and from employment in Europe. They envy the freedom of movement Turkish citizens enjoy and learn of the advantages of life in a non-Communist society from letters of relatives in Turkey. The Sofia regime's efforts to isolate them have not worked but have recently been extended, according to the Turkish press, to jamming of Turkish-language radio broadcasts.

"The Turkish Republic has never made any territorial claims on Bulgaria. Since the early 1950s, Ankara refused to accept a large influx of immigrants. A few thousand Bulgarian Turks have continued to come to Turkey each year within the framework of carefully supervised arrangements for uniting families. They have joined older groups of Bulgarian-origin in the provinces of Bursa and Eskisehir.

"Even if Turkey were eager to add all Bulgarian Turks to her own 50 million inhabitants, Sofia could not afford the economic loss, for Muslims are among the country's most productive farmers. No solution for the problem is in sight...

"There have been private appeals to *Amnesty International* and there is talk of raising the issue in the United Nations and other international bodies.

"The Senate of Ankara University issued a statement on February 8 condemning 'the current Bulgarian regime not only for failing to implement international agreements on the rights of minorities, but the principles of its own minority policy.

"High-level jobs have long been denied to ethnic Turks, the statement continues, 'and most of their Mosques as well as their schools have been closed'..."

Time (February 26, 1985)

"At about 3 a.m., villagers first heard rumbling of Bulgarian army halftracks. By daybreak, all roads leading to the tiny ethnic Turkish settlement of Yablonovo in northeast Bulgaria were effectively cut off. Then the terror began. Militiamen burst into homes as frightened villagers stood by helplessly.

"According to reports that filtered out later, the intruders singled out each head of household, thrust a photocopy form into his hands and ordered him to change his name and those of his family to make them 'more Bulgarian.'

"The form included a line for each husband and wife to write their old Islamic names; on another, they were to write their new Bulgarian names. Below were spaces for the new names of up to five children. Men who refused to sign the paper were reportedly slapped across the face; some were forced to watch as militiamen made advances toward their wives and teenage daughters. The women were sometimes compelled to disrobe completely, and several were said to have been raped in front of their families. If these tactics were not effective, said travelers who later talked to residents, the soldiers held pistols to their captives' heads and repeated the demand, 'sign the form.' Most of the village's 1800 ethnic Turks eventually complied.

The early-morning raid on Yablonovo, which took place on January 12, was apparently part of an official Bulgarian campaign to force the assimilation of the country's 900,000 ethnic Turks, who make up 10 percent of the population...

"Historically, Bulgaria has dealt harshly with its minorities, including the Turks...

"Following the Communist takeover in 1944, Bulgaria adopted a constitution that made promises to all its minority groups. By 1947, however, Turkish-speaking schools were forced to merge with their Bulgarian counterparts. In 1974 the Turkish language as a course of study was eliminated altogether. In modern day Bulgaria, ethnic Turks are not inducted into the Bulgarian army but serve instead in a national construction corps. The apparent reason: Bulgarian officers do not trust Turks with guns...

"Officially, the Bulgarian government refuses to admit that the ethnic Turks are being forced to change their names...

"One of the few exceptions to the name change campaign is weightlifting prodigy Naim Suleimanov, 17, who apparently threatened never again to compete in sporting events for Bulgaria if he was made to change his name. Many Bulgarians who have heard of the violence in Yablonovo and other towns seem undisturbed by the treatment of the Turks. Said one Sofia resident: 'If they want to live in Bulgaria, let them take Bulgarian names'..."

Arabia (March 1985)

"Bloody clashes have broken out recently and hundreds of Turkish Muslims killed resisting a brutal campaign of forced Bulgarization of the ethnic minority. The Bulgarian government unleashed the brutality on the grounds that the Turkish people must assume Bulgarian names to reflect an allegedly uniform Bulgarian Slav nation. There have been alarming reports lately that up to 800 Turkish opponents of this forced assimilation were killed by Bulgarian security forces.

"With the avenue via Turkey sealed, Bulgarian Muslims' only contacts with the outside world, Sofia was hoping to put a halt to the flow of further information on the disturbances. In fact, the deterioration in the condition of Muslim people initially came to attention only when it was discovered that the number of illegal emigrants coming from Bulgaria to Turkey had suddenly gone up. The regime further gave notice of this intention of clamping down on information when it expelled three Turkish journalists who were trying to investigate reports of the plight of the Turks and other Bulgarian Muslims.

"At the end of last year, as part of its five-year campaign ending in 1985, Bulgarianizing all passports and identity cards, the government announced that it had successfully completed the process in the urban areas. The government then tried to extend their campaign into the Khaskoro and Momchilgrad areas in South Dobrudja. But the Turkish people resisted Operation Bulgarization. They refused to sign voluntary Bulgarization papers and instantly change name from, say, Ahmet to Petur, so denying their culture and their future generations by a so called name change.

"Consequently, the people were subjected to various forms of harassment and many were put into prison camps. When they still refused to bow, military reinforcements were brought in. A former Bulgarian secret police officer, Rahim Muminot, who recently obtained political asylum in Turkey said, 'In October 1984, the former mayor of Simolen, Mr. Cemil, was pushed to change his name but he refused. The next day he was run over by a truck.' In the same town four Muslim Pomaks committed suicide in protest against the imposition of a 'Bulgarian' name and being banned from practicing their religion.

"In addition, early this year, ten Mosques were destroyed by dynamite in Simolen because the authorities wanted to build hotels and car parks. Countless people have been forced to accept Slavic names and new documents have been issued to them. Even Muslim cemeteries were destroyed and the tombstones that had Arabic inscriptions broken.

"Turkish people, however, have a long history in Bulgaria. The early Bulgars were themselves a Turkish race - western Chavush - and indeed the name means mixed people. Consequently, most Muslims in Bulgaria are of Turkish origin. These, along with Pomaks (ethnic Bulgarians) and Muslims gypsies, constitute, according to Bulgarian Muslim sources, some 25 percent of the country's population of about eight million.

"The assimilation of the Muslims was often engineered by relocation of whole populations. Thus, for example, in July 1948, 50 wagonloads of Muslims from the Rodop region were forcefully sent to Dobruca; in October 1949, 28 wagonloads of Muslim families from Mestanli, Kosukavak, and Daridere were sent to the North; in September 1950 another 63 wagonloads of Muslim families were taken from Kosukavak and moved to Troyan, Razgrad, and Sumnu areas. This transfer was effected in the name of work, development, and improvement. Young people were separated from their families and environs and scattered among Bulgarian groups. They were taken from the Rodop and Deliorman regions, where most Muslims lived, and sent to cities like Sofia, Burgaz, and Dimitovgrad (Kayacik), where there was almost no Muslim population. There are families which even today do not know where their children have been relocated."

The Wall Street Journal (March 4, 1985)

"How countries treat their minority groups is a leading test of their level of civilization. Bulgaria is the current Soviet Bloc model for how gruesomely uncivilized totalitarian regimes can get. Will Western human rights groups take any notice?

"Reports have gradually leaked of horrors committed by the Bulgarians against the country's minority Turkish population. At least 200 ethnic Turks living in Bulgaria have been killed in fighting Sofia's 'Bulgarization' program. The Communist regime wants this group of one million Moslems, a tenth of the Bulgarian population, to change their names and forsake their religion. The method of assimilation is to roll tanks into mostly Turkish-populated farming villages and force people at gunpoint to change their names from Turkish/Moslem to Slavic/Agnostic. Ismail is Ivan, one four-year-old Kenan Evren, named for the Turkish President, is now Kamen Angelov Karabashev.

"Witnesses report that areas scheduled for renaming are sealed off before the storm troops arrive. Three journalists from Turkey were expelled from Bulgaria when they tried to investigate, and a *Reuters* correspondent was also turned away. Women are stripped in public, and men are beaten. Even in areas not yet chosen for this treatment, the Bulgars outlaw the Turkish language, destroy Mosques, and force practicing Moslems from their jobs.

"But why the special concern with names? Why such violence? This may be punishment for anti-government bombs this summer in Plovdiv, center of a Turkish minority area. Another explanation is that Bulgarian dictator Todor Zhivkov wants good Bulgar results from a census he's called for later this year, the first since 1965. Moslems reproduce at a faster rate than Slavs, but Mr. Zhivkov does not want to be the one to break this news to the Russians. After all, the Kremlin has a bigger Moslem problem to deal with in the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, where demographics may someday cramp godless rule.

"The Turkish government has known about this oppression since last year. Until recently, however, Prime Minister Turgut Ozal said that there was nothing his country could do. For one thing, the Soviet natural-gas pipeline to Turkey goes through Bulgaria, giving the Communists crucial leverage. But Ankara has recalled its Ambassador to Sofia and demanded that a group of parliamentarians be allowed to make on-site inspections in Turkish villages in Bulgaria. Turkey has offered repatriation, but Sofia must first agree to let its people go. So far, no word from Sofia. Groups like *Amnesty International*, quick to inspect Turkish prisons, should now take a look at Bulgarian villages.

The Turks are not alone in worrying about what happens to minorities in communist countries. Hungary, whose socialism allows some limited human rights, recently issued new domestic guidelines that pledge equal rights for minorities. They also 'consider it a natural demand that in neighboring countries citizens of Magyar nationality be able to speak their native language and develop their natural culture.' Hungarian authorities are worried by anti-Magyar edicts in Romania and Czechoslovakia.

"This most recent outrage from Bulgaria perfectly fits the pattern of the Pope-plotting, drug-running Bulgars. It's no surprise that totalitarians who disdain the rights of individual also banish the rights of groups."

The Chicago Sun Times (April 3, 1985)

"The State Department put it this way: 'The government of Bulgaria appears determined to denationalize ethnic and cultural distinctions of the one-million-strong Turkish-speaking population within its borders.'

In plain language, that means the Bulgarians are killing, wounding, and uprooting members of the Turkish minority, even trying to force them to give up their identify and to adopt Slavic names...

"It is, in short, another damnable demonstration of human suppression by terror and bullet, at the hands of Soviet-dominated ideological puppets..."

The Washington Times (April 3, 1985)

"Community Bulgaria appears bent on assimilating at gunpoint the huge Turkish minority within its borders, the State Department said..."

"According to State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb, all Bulgarian government-supported Turkish language radio broadcasts have ceased and Turkish language newspapers have been shut down..."

A B C (Spain)(April 3, 1985)

"...Nowadays, we are facing two cases:.. that of South Africa, where white repression against the black majority has been recently denounced to the whole world, and that of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, about which almost nobody has raised its voice, because of the fact that Bulgaria is a communist country and also that the Turks are not blacks.

"Therefore, only brief information has reached us, according to which almost a million of Turks living in Bulgaria (with a population of 9 million inhabitants; the Turkish minority represents 8.5 percent) are being subjected to a Bulgarization process in a

coercive way by curtailing their political, economic, and cultural rights in the form of threats, beatings, fines, blockage of bank accounts, refusal of employment, etc.; or in other words, a whole repertoire of discriminatory practices."

Tanjug (April 3, 1985)

"A visit by Turkish parliamentarians to Sofia would be inappropriate at the moment' said the Bulgarian Narodno Sobranie (National Assembly) in a reply to a Turkish parliamentarians' proposal to visit Sofia and settle the problems which have arisen in relations between the two countries.

"Thus Bulgaria again rejected, this time indirectly, a dialogue with Turkey on the position of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. In other words, Bulgaria wishes to continue the process of assimilation until the autumn census. Observers consider that this also had some influence on the contents of the Bulgarian Sobranie's reply."

Reuters (April 3, 1985)

"How would you explain to your 11-year-old daughter that she had to change her name?' the embittered father asked.

"Mehmet, a 35-year-old Bulgarian ethnic Turk, described how three months ago he was stopped by police as he left his home in northern Bulgaria. They handed him copies of an official application for him to change his name.

"There was one of them in front and one behind. They gave me three days to choose Bulgarian names for me and my family. There was no choice involved. They have the guns and I have a family to support,' he told *Reuters*.

"The tale recounted by Mehmet, a construction worker like many of his kinsmen, told of anguish, despair, and dilemma after Bulgaria's communist authorities launched a program early this year to force the 800,000-strong Turkish community to drop the names of their ancestors and adopt Slav ones.

"Diplomatic sources say resistance by some ethnic Turks led to many deaths in clashes in the Turkish-populated south. The authorities deny there has been any coercion or casualties and say ethnic Turks changed their names of their own free will.

"Diplomats say the program is part of longer term plans to forge a united Bulgarian nation.

"Bulgarian officials now appear to reject the orthodox historical view that ethnic Turks are direct descendants of Ottoman rule. They now describe them as 'Turkified Bulgarians' who have returned to the Bulgarian family.

Mehmet, like thousands of others, weighed up the realities and finally took the line of least resistance, adopting a Slav first name, patronymic and family name.

"He is now called Mikhail although to friends and family he remains Mehmet. He is bitter, still confused, but resigned.

"According to his account given to *Reuters* earlier this week, the town's authorities announced the move at an assembly of local leaders in late January. Police went from house to house through the Turkish quarters handing out applications forms.

"By then reports had begun to leak out of casualties among ethnic Turks in the south - something, Mehmet admitted, that weighed heavily in his final decision.

"He called a family meeting of his elderly parents, his wife and his 11-year-old daughter to discuss the options.

"It was everywhere the same. Nobody went to work for five days. They stayed inside, wrangled, argued, and wept and thought of ways to get out of it. But we finally gave in,' he said.

"Mehmet knew of no clashes in his region although he was quick to recount rumors of casualties elsewhere in the country.

"The first to fill in the forms and take them to the council offices were the (communist) party members. Then most people decided to do the same. There was no choice.'

"His daughter was a special problem. It was difficult explaining to her why she had to change her name. I just told her the truth. She made me promise I would keep on calling her (Ayshe).'

"A 15-year-old youth now called Andrei - but still Ahmed to his school friends and the silk-trouserred Turkish women of his neighborhood - told a similar tale.

"My father called us and we talked it over. Mother cried all the time. Finally, we chose names and father took the forms to the town council,' he said.

"At school we have to use our new names when the head teacher is around. but everyone still calls me Ahmed. The teachers explain it by telling us we were once Bulgarian and not Turkish and that we have become Bulgarian again."

Associated Press (April 16, 1985)

The Kuwaiti parliament condemned what it called a crackdown on Moslems in Bulgaria, urging al Moslems in the world to check alleged attempts to force Bulgarian Moslems to forsake their faith.

"Kuwait's National Assembly (Parliament) has been watching with extreme sorrow and deep pain the escalating crackdown on Moslems in the Republic of Bulgaria, where illegal pressure is being practiced on these Moslems to compel them to abandon their religion,' parliament complained in a statement.

"It also claimed that Bulgarian authorities have been putting pressure on their Moslem citizens to convert to other religions.

"These Bulgaria Moslems, the statement claimed, were being 'forced to change their names, often sending them to jail and impeding their bids to earn their livelihoods, while some were forced to leave the country.'

'While condemning this persecution, the Kuwaiti National Assembly urges all Moslem and non-Moslem people with free consciences throughout the world to act positively and put an end to these (Bulgarian) practices,' the statement added.

"Kuwaiti maintains good ties with the Bulgarian government. Kuwait is the only conservative Arab country of the oil-rich Gulf region to have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and other countries of the Eastern Bloc.

The Los Angeles Times (April 21, 1985)

"...Bulgaria is one of the few Eastern Block countries that does not recognize the existence of national minorities. For the last decade, the government has promoted the idea that the country's ethnic Turks should 'Bulgarize' their names in the interests of national unity.

"The program, launched dramatically three months ago, now seems to have been concluded, reports of violent clashes between resisting Turks and police have subsided.

"But Western diplomats say the venture, in the short term at least, has accentuated division between the Turkish minority and their Slav fellow citizens.

"If the policy was meant to create a uniform Bulgarian identity, then it has badly backfired,' said one diplomat. 'It has alienated the Turks even more and heightened suspicion of them by the Bulgarians.'

"Communist party officials maintain that ethnic Turks who changed their names recently did so voluntarily.

"But within the Turkish community, the sullen resentment of those who relinquished the Muslim names of their forefathers is obvious.

"They have the guns. We don't,' said teenager Ahmed, now officially known as Andrei, in a typically bitter comment.

"The name-changing program has been a staggering bureaucratic undertaking. Thousands of new internal passports, driving licenses, savings books, and other official documents have been reissued.

"Diplomats say the operation was clearly planned months in advance. But they say Bulgarian authorities probably miscalculated on how much resistance they would meet and did not foresee the anxieties it would stoke among Bulgarians and Turks alike...

In a total population of 10 million, Bulgarians outnumber Turks by nine to one. But they have always felt uneasy at the minority's alien Muslim customs and high birth rate.

"One Bulgarian woman said: 'We had to do something. There are so many of them. But, of course, I don't agree with violence.'

"Official silence on the issue, punctuated by tantalizing references in speeches that offer only fragments of the overall picture, have baffled Bulgarians and ethnic Turks alike.

"One particularly barbed comment came from Communist Party Politburo member Stanko Todorov in a little publicized speech last month.

"Those who want to dance to the music of Ankara's propaganda and its nationalist agents...and want to emigrate should know that instructions have been given

to the competent organs for them to be assured of rapid emigration within three or four hours,' he said.

"He added: 'But they will not go to Turkey, but to other regions of Bulgaria where they will live more quietly and find happiness.'

"It was a warning of, at best, internal exile or, at worst, prison..."

The New York Times (May 31, 1985)

"Bulgaria has been getting a bad press, what with the roman trial charging involvement in the attempted assassination of the Pope, the forcible assimilation of the large Turkish minority, and murky accounts of drugs and arms trafficking. It has made officials edgy, all the more so because of an intense nationalist campaign in recent years that is still gaining momentum.

"In fact, making the country's ethnic Turks change their names to typical Bulgarian ones has been officially presented as a 'historical and revolutionary act' to prove that Bulgaria is a 'one nationality state.'

"There are an estimated one million people of Turkish origin among the nine million Bulgarians. Several hundred have reportedly died in clashes provoked by the compulsory name change, although it is impossible to obtain reliable figures. The official stand is that 'there are no Turks in Bulgaria,' and that the people involved are descendants of 'pure' Bulgarians who had been converted under Ottoman rule. They are now being 'liberated' and invited to share 'Bulgarian national consciousness'...

"Ethnic Turks, mostly rural, have a much higher birthrate than the rest. The national dream needs them; emigration is ruled out. It is strangely blind, after their own experience of stubborn cultural survival, that the Bulgarians imagine they can change mentalities by changing names...

"Dirty tricks are dirty tricks. They happen...Most of all now, Bulgaria is concerned with its image."

The New York Times Magazine, David Binder (December 8, 1985)

"I returned with a certain uneasiness to Bulgaria, where I had served 20 years earlier as a correspondent. In part, my discomfort grew from memories of wretched hotel food, which invariably made me break out in boils, and the rather hostile attitude of Bulgarian officials functioning under a mandated policy of anti-Americanism. Primarily it was based on the fact that the People's Republic had issued a ukase barring me from the country for life. Twice.

"...Domestically, the government is waging a remorseless campaign to force homogeneity on what has been a typically multi-ethnic Balkan salad of Turks, Moslem Pomaks, Gypsies, Armenians, a handful of Albanians, Greeks and Romanians, not to mention several hundred thousand Macedonians.

"In the recent drive to 'Bulgarize' the Turkish minority, at least 200 civilians and soldiers were killed. (*Amnesty International* has reported the figure at 500.) The aim, as described by the Communist Politburo member Stanko Todorov, is to make Bulgaria a 'single-nationality state' -- something southeastern Europe has not known in its 3,000 years of recorded history.

"Certainly the push to 'Bulgarize' the minorities is the most dramatic event within the country since Mr. Zhivkov's rise to power. The campaign, which, according to some Bulgarians, was conceived in a secret party directive in 1971, has been massive: Although 250,000 Bulgarian Macedonians were recorded in the 1946 census, by 1975 none were listed -- nor were there any headings indicating other national minorities.

"Not content simply to drop minority listings, over the last four years the government has forced some 5,000 ethnic Albanians, along with thousands of Gypsies and Armenians, to take Bulgarian names. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has lodged a formal protest.

"In August 1984, the push gathered force, in anticipation of a national census scheduled for this month -- when the government is expected to declare the country ethnically pure, with no hints of any cultural diversity.

"Last December, the government focused its efforts on Bulgaria's one million ethnic Turks, starting in the southern district of Kurdzhali. There was bloody resistance in Momchilgrad and the state militia, the military and the Zapasi, or special reserves, were called in. Dozens of people were killed. In early January, the drive was expanded to the north. Whole districts were sealed off to foreigners.

"Armed forces typically would surround a village and then force the inhabitants, at gunpoint, to line up and sign name-change petitions. Stopped by a roadblock on the outskirts of Yablonovo, on the northern rim of the Balkan range, a foreigner questioned a soldier. Yes, said the young rifleman, Turks had been killed in the rural town, and so had some soldiers. In all, about 30 died, he said, brandishing his AK-47 and sputtering, "Rrra-tat-tat-tat."

"The government has closed all Turkish schools (there had been 1,199 Turkish schools in 1951) and the one Turkish newspaper, *Yeni Isik*; Turkish-language radio broadcasts have been taken off the air and fines imposed for speaking Turkish in public. Increasing numbers of Turks have fled to Romania and Greece.

"A good deal of historical revisionism has accompanied the campaign. In 1964, Todor Zhivkov proclaimed that 'all possible opportunities had been created for the Turkish population to develop their culture and language.' As late as last year, Bulgaria told a United Nations committee that it had national minorities. But in early March, Stanko Todorov of the Politburo declared in the Turkish village of Novachevo: 'At the end of 1984 and the beginning of 1985, a process was carried out with a new force spontaneously and comprehensively restoring the Bulgarian names of our compatriots who had Turkish-Arabic names. This process was concluded in the whole country in two to three months. The workers considered their past, recognized their Bulgarian roots and their Bulgarian national belonging.' Ethnic Turks, he boasted, were really descendants of Bulgarians who had been 'forcibly Turkicized' under Ottoman rule.

"Clearly, some are not willing to accept this new version of their past. An explosion rocked the railway station in Plovdiv in August 1984, but it was not until May 16 of this year that Kostadin Lyutov, the state prosecutor, acknowledged that a woman had been killed in the blast; he added that seven others were killed by an explosion on a train on March 9. Some observers suggest that the death toll might be as high as 30 from bombs in a supermarket, a tramway, a disco, and a hotel.

"Off the record, Bulgarian officials charge that ethnic Turks are responsible; publicly, the bombs have touched off an explosion of hatred. 'Our Turks don't believe in

God, they believe in whisky,' a middle-ranking government official remarked with a sneer. Later, in an outdoor cafe facing Sofia's Eagle Bridge, a 29-year-old graduate student told me vehemently that all Turks 'deserve to be punished.' Others trotted out rationalizations typical of such ethnocentricity: the minority populations were reproducing at a fast clip, while the Slavic population was stagnating. The fact that the original Bulgarians -- the Bulgars -- were a Turkic people did not stop their xenophobic responses.

"Still, the Zhivkov government is palpably nervous about the ethnic Turk issue.

"What was it Boyan Traikov had said to me? 'They think we are a totalitarian police state, that no bird can pass over without being seen, that telephone conversations are being tapped, foreigners followed. But there is no such system of control.'

Nonetheless, as a passenger in the cars of Western diplomats, it was clear to me that many were followed by unmarked automobiles of the Dazjavna Sigurnost, the state security force.

"Telephone taps? One day I called the Turkish Embassy from the hotel and was told to come to the chancery on Boulevard Tolbukhin. Guarding the Embassy, in addition to a policeman, was a muscular youth in a camouflage uniform with a broad leather holster, from which the grip of a ten-shot Skorpion machine pistol protruded. He was a member of the Zapasi, the special reserve unit deployed in suppressing the Turks. Neither the policeman nor the Zapasi trooper bothered me, but next morning at 7:05 my phone rang and, when I answered, a male voice, plainly Slavic, snarled: 'Tolbukhin!'

"Tolbukhin?' I inquired.

"Yes,' came the reply, and then the line went dead.

"My uneasiness returned. This was a warning. Yet, several days later when I set out into the mountains to find some ethnic Turks, no one seemed to be following.

"The Turks were not hard to find, but they were frightened. A group of construction workers told me everyone in their village had been compelled to accept Bulgarian names last December. There had been resistance and one man had been killed, others had been taken away to a camp for political prisoners on Belene, an island in the Danube.

"Whenever anyone passed on the road, the men fell silent. With a look of disgust, one proffered his new internal identity pass, with his new Bulgarian name. The workers' Bulgarian foreman had warned them not to talk to strangers, one explained, adding that if they were caught they could be put off the job.

"Nonetheless, they ticked off their complaints and fears: Mosques had been closed; perhaps ethnic Turks would be denied higher schooling; they were not getting the full wages due them. Why the campaign of repression? 'Because they fear we Turks will demand a federated state,' said one. Would he emigrate if he could? 'I was born here and I'll die here.'

"Such nationalism is also apparent in the schools. One Western diplomat tells the story of his son, who was enrolled in a Bulgarian high school. One day, in a military course, an officer-teacher pointed to a map of Europe. 'You are not here because of the NATO military threat,' he said, 'You're here for this!' He rolled down a map showing

medieval Bulgaria encompassing large areas of present-day Greece, Yugoslavia, and Albania. It is just such extreme nationalism, and the dream of restoring the medieval empire of 'Greater Bulgaria,' that brought woe and shrinkage upon the nation in the first place."

The Economist, "The Other Side of the Moon" (December 21, 1985)

"Imagine that several hundred civilians are killed by security forces in a modern European country. Imagine, too, that the international outcry this would normally provoke is muted because nobody can establish the true extent of the killings, or whether they took place at all. Impossible? It should be. But that is precisely what seems to have happened in Bulgaria in the past year. If indeed it did, the Bulgarian case is a striking example of how, even in today's Europe, massacre can still hide behind masquerade.

"The presumed victims were Bulgaria's ethnic Turks, believed to number about 800,000, or nearly 10% of the population. A year ago reports began to reach the West of a systematic campaign of assimilation against these people, beginning with the demand that they change their Turkish names to Bulgarian ones. Many of those who tried to resist being "Bulgarized" were beaten up; some--nobody can tell for sure whether the figure is closer to 40 or 400, or more--are said to have been killed. There have since been threats to resettle any complainers away from their native towns and villages, and there are fears that resettlement may eventually be in store for the 5,000 or more Bulgarian Turks who are believed to have been put in prison.

"The Bulgarian version of events rings, to put it mildly, hollow. The official word in Sofia is that Bulgarian Turks do not exist; those who Bulgarized their names were merely ordinary Bulgarians whose ancestors had been forced to convert to Islam and adopt Turkish names during five centuries of Ottoman rule. Yet in the past the same government has admitted to a clear distinction between Bulgarians of Turkish origin and the so-called Pomaks--120,000 or so Muslims of Bulgarian origin, whose own name-changes were arranged in the 1970s in an earlier Bulgarization campaign. The government insists that the latest bout of name-changing was 'voluntary and spontaneous.' If so, why were western diplomats and journalists refused access to the alleged trouble-spots?

"Some of the stories may well be exaggerated--accounts of atrocities often are--but there is little doubt that something nasty has been going on. The problem is proving it, given the Bulgarian government's state monopoly of information. Result: case unproven, scandal largely ignored. Examples of the case-unproven-and-ignored variety can occur all too readily in such countries. Outsiders can learn little about prison camps in Albania, or the unpleasant things that have been happening in President Ceausescu's Romania. A deep murk still hangs over much of the Soviet Union. None of this would be possible anywhere in Western Europe, even in Spain and Portugal when they were under Franco and Salazar. That is one of the meanings of the word totalitarian.

"The Dangers of Deceit. The lesson from the Bulgarian affair, however, is not entirely discouraging. A little light leaked through the official news screen. It may in the end be enough to embarrass Mr. Todor Zhivkov's government.

"The affair has undermined Bulgaria's attempt to cut a better figure in the West. Its relations with Turkey, so carefully cultivated in recent years, have turned sour. The Russians have been notably reluctant to support their close ally on the Turkish question, and the awkwardness they feel about it may be one reason for Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's visible coolness towards Mr. Zhivkov. And if the Bulgarians are seriously

hoping to wipe away the national identity of their ethnic Turks, the history of the Balkans is against them. All of that history--not least Bulgaria's own re-emergency as a nation in 1878 after Ottoman rule--shows that the sense of ethnic identity tends to outlive the regimes which attempt to suppress it."

Chicago Tribune (January 24, 1986)

"Ethnic Turks living in Bulgaria are being persecuted, imprisoned, and killed in a government campaign to force them to assimilate, an *Amnesty International* report says.

"The report, which is still to be published, contains evidence that parents are being persecuted for having their sons circumcised in accordance with Moslem custom.

"One man, Hyusein Hasanov, 34, a shopkeeper from Nengishevo village in the Balkan mountains, was arrested last August because he had his 5-year-old son circumcised. *Amnesty* has just learned that he was released, although he was reported to have lost his job.

"Another man who has now left Bulgaria, according to *Amnesty*, stated that the authorities went to his home twice to check whether his son had been circumcised. He was obliged to sign a form stating that he would be sent to prison if his son was circumcised.

"*Amnesty* has the names of over 100 people killed either in clashes with security forces or in attacks by security forces on peaceful demonstrations. Despite severe official censorship, it also has the names of over 250 people arrested between December 1984 and March 1985 when, according to official Bulgarian sources, the entire ethnic Turkish minority, estimated at 900,000, 'spontaneously' and 'voluntarily' renounced their Islamic names for Bulgarian ones.

"That's the first phase of the Bulgarian government's campaign to force the Turkish minority to take Bulgarian names. Hyusein Hasanov's real name is Hyusein Mehmedov Osmanov. 'Mehmet' is Turkish for 'Mohammed.' Muftis called 'Mehmet' have been given the name 'Hkristo,' the Bulgarian name for Christ, a bizarre choice for a communist regime.

"The second phase, which, according to Turkish sources, began last April, includes the reissuing of all personal documents, such as identity cards and driving licenses, in the Bulgarian names the Turks have been given. Sofia radio has stopped all broadcasts in Turkish, and Turkish-language newspapers have been proscribed. December census forms, the first for 10 years, allowed no spot for national minorities to register themselves.

"The campaign has taken on a macabre aspect. According to reports reaching Turkey from relatives in Bulgaria, government workers are altering names on tombstones in Turkish villages.

"The enforced assimilation of the Bulgarian Turks, the biggest ethnic minority in the country, follows similar actions against Gypsies, Macedonians, and Romanians."

Amnesty International, "Ethnic Turks Jailed and Killed in Bulgaria" (Jan./Feb. 1986)

"Bulgarian authorities continue to imprison and kill large numbers of ethnic Turks, according to information documented by *Amnesty International*. In its campaign

to force cultural assimilation upon the nation's Turkish minority, the government has responded to peaceful resistance by committing human rights abuses, including unlawful and deliberate killings.

"Despite stringent censorship of information by Bulgarian officials, *Amnesty* has obtained the names of more than 250 ethnic Turks arrested between December 1984 and March 1985. The organization has 'adopted' many of them as prisoners of conscience, reportedly jailed because they refused to renounce their Islamic names and to accept Bulgarian names.

Amnesty has also received information on more than 100 people killed by security forces since December 1984. Some of the victims allegedly participated in armed resistance to security forces, while others merely joined in peaceful demonstrations to protest assimilation.

"According to an eyewitness account consistent with other reports reaching *Amnesty*, police and military troops surrounded the ethnic Turkish village of Gorski Izvor in southern Bulgaria shortly after midnight in December 1984. Officials distributed identity cards bearing new Bulgarian names to each household in the village. The following day, Turkish residents of Gorski Izvor and several other towns reportedly marched in peaceful protest against the government's campaign to change their names. Security forces with dogs opened fire on the demonstrators. *Amnesty's* information indicates that the troops killed six people, including a two-year-old child and her mother, and wounded 40 others.

"Officials reportedly arrested Yusein Kabov, a Muslim priest in Gorski Izvor, last March. He allegedly continued his religious activities after government agents destroyed the minaret or tower of the town's Mosque and converted the building into a tobacco warehouse. *Amnesty* 'adopted' him as a prisoner of conscience, along with six other residents of Gorski Izvor jailed for protesting the Bulgarian name-changing policy.

"Other measures taken by the government against the Turkish minority include imposition of fines for speaking Turkish in public and imprisonment of the parents of circumcised children. Authorities reportedly forced one man to sign a form acknowledging that he would be imprisoned if his son were circumcised.

"Ethnic Turks have lived in the territory now administered by the Bulgarian government since the 14th century. Estimates place their present number at about 850,000--that is, 10 percent of Bulgaria's population. Bulgarian authorities, however, deny the existence of a Turkish minority. Stanko Todorov, one of the country's highest ranking officials, said last March that in Bulgaria 'there are no parts of any other peoples and nations.'

"The Bulgarian government ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1970. Article 27 of the Covenant provides that 'in those states in which ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right...to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.'

"*Amnesty* sent a letter last fall to the Bulgarian Minister of the interior, detailing its information on reported killings and calling for an independent inquiry into them."

ANNEX II

**TREATIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS
THAT DETERMINE THE LEGAL STATUS OF
THE TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA**

When international treaties and documents are studied, it becomes clear that from the time of the Ottoman Empire, many treaties have been signed with respect to the legal status of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. The basic rights and freedoms of the Turks in Bulgaria have been protected by international law since the recognition of Bulgaria as an autonomous administration in 1878. Their protection has been preserved through various agreements and international documents signed in the following years. These treaties and documents secure the basic rights and freedoms of the Turks in Bulgaria within the framework of (1) minority rights, and (2) the protection of human rights at the international level.

1. Rights of Minorities

The Neuilly Peace Treaty, signed between Bulgaria and the Allies on November 27, 1919, included provisions recognizing rights of the Turks in Bulgaria so as to enable them to continue living with a special minority status. Section IV of the Treaty was entitled "Protection of Minorities," and Article 49 of that section provided that the conditions stated there were constitutional provisions. Article 54 has a special significance for the Turks in Bulgaria, because this article states that Bulgarian citizens who belong to different racial, linguistic, and religious minorities will be treated on an equal footing with the other Bulgarian citizens, and goes on to state that these minorities will have the right to establish welfare organizations, religious and social institutions and schools, as well as the right to supervise them and to receive an education in their own language, and also to practice their own religion. Article 55 foresees that the Bulgarian government will provide facilities for Bulgarian citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian to be brought up in their own religion, in places where they are concentrated.

The basic agreement that exists between the Turkish Republic and Bulgaria, on the status of the Turks in Bulgaria, was signed on October 18, 1925. The first paragraph of Article A of the annexed protocol of this agreement states that those provisions in the Lausanne Peace Treaty concerning the non-Muslim minorities will be applied to the Bulgarians in Turkey, and that the Muslim minorities in Bulgaria will benefit from the provisions of the 1919 Neuilly Agreement. Thus Turkey, which was not one of the parties that signed the Neuilly Agreement, was given the assurance that Muslim Turks would also benefit from the rights stated in this agreement. Turkey was also assured that its government had direct legal ties with the Turks in Bulgaria. In other words, aside from the Neuilly Agreement, Bulgaria has undertaken a contractual obligation towards Turkey with regard to the minority rights of the Turks holding Bulgarian citizenship. This treaty is still in force.

(It is also worthy to mention that the expression of "Turkish minority in Bulgaria" was used by the Bulgarian government in the 1950s and the agreement signed between Turkey and Bulgaria on March 22, 1968, on the reunification of families referred to "Bulgarian citizens of Turkish descent.")

2. Protection of Human Rights within the Framework of International Agreements

Besides benefiting from the minority status, the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Turks in Bulgaria are also secured within the framework of the protection of human rights in an international context. The international agreement of primary importance among those which both Bulgaria and Turkey signed is the United Nations Charter. Various provisions of the U.N. Charter oblige the member countries to respect human rights. In this respect, Sub-Article 3 of Article 1 includes "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion" among the purposes of the United Nations Organization. Article 13 states that the General Assembly shall initiate studies and make recommendations for assisting in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without making any distinction. Similarly, Article 62 authorized the Economic and Social Committee, one of the main organs of the Organization, to make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. Treatment by the Bulgarian government is against all these provisions.

Another international document recognized by both Turkey and Bulgaria is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration, adopted by the United Nations in December 1948, is not legally binding, because U.N. General Assembly resolutions are, in principle, advisory in nature. However, the states that signed the Declaration agreed to behave within the framework of its aims and its principles. Many provisions of this Declaration ban such oppression like the treatment of Turks in Bulgaria. For instance, Article 2 of the Declaration states that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration without distinction as to race, color, sex, language and religion;" Article 7 provides that "everyone is equal before the law and is entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law;" and Article 18 ensures that everyone is entitled to the freedoms of thought, conscience and religion either individually or in a community.

Another international document signed by both Turkey and Bulgaria is the Helsinki Final Act. This Act, signed in 1975 by heads of state or government, does not contain provisions that are binding either. However, in the light of international law, it may be concluded that the signatory countries have clearly assumed some obligations in this document.

Most of the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act denounce treatment which is similar to the way the Turks in Bulgaria are being treated today. Paragraph VII which bears the title "Respect of the freedoms of opinion, conscience, religion and beliefs" provides that states will observe these rights regardless of race, sex, language or religion. Furthermore, the fourth paragraph of the same chapter contains a special provision on minorities, stating that the signatory states which have minorities in their respective countries recognize for these minorities the right of equality before the law. They provide them the opportunity to benefit from all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Furthermore, the last paragraph states that the parties will act according to the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It reads "they will fulfill the obligations imposed by the document titled 'Fulfillment of Obligations Assumed in Accordance with International Law'" and that the signatory states should fulfill their obligations with good will.

Apart from these international documents, Bulgaria has assumed responsibilities through other treaties to which Turkey is not a party. The most important of these agreements is the 1947 Paris Treaty. According to Article 2, "Bulgaria would take all necessary measures to enable all the people living on its territory to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech, the press and broadcasting, religion, thought, and holding meetings without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

There are also other agreements signed within the framework of the United Nations. One of them is the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination which was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December 1965 and ratified by Bulgaria on August 8, 1966. The various articles of this convention state that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms without distinctions of any kind, particularly as to race, color, or national origin. Thus the Bulgarization procedures applied to the Turks, such as changing their names and exerting other forms of pressure to bring about their assimilation, are against this Convention.

Other U.N. conventions give contractual obligations to Bulgaria. There are two that were accepted by the U.N. Assembly on December 16, 1966:

1. the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; and
2. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

These two conventions guarantee that the rights enumerated therein will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, or social origin, property, birth or other status (Article 2). Bulgaria ratified these two covenants in September 1970.

ANNEX III

EXCERPTS FROM THE STATEMENTS
OF BULGARIAN OFFICIALS

Congratulatory message by the Bulgarian Head of State, Mr. Todor Zhivkov, to the Turkish-language monthly, "Yeni Hayat," on the 10th Anniversary of the magazine, March 1964:

"All possible opportunities have been created for the Turkish population to develop their culture and language freely...The children of the Turkish population must learn their mother tongue and perfect it. To this end, it is necessary that the teaching [of the Turkish language] be improved in schools. Now and in the future the Turkish population will speak their mother tongue; they will develop their progressive traditions in this language; they will write their contemporary literary works [in Turkish]; they will sing their wonderfully beautiful songs [in Turkish]...Many more books must be published in this country in Turkish, including the best works of progressive writers in Turkey."

* * *

Interview with Mr. Todor Jivkov, Head of State of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, by Mr. Robert Maxwell, President of the Pergamon Press, on the occasion of the book entitled "Todor Jivkov Statesman and Founder of New Bulgaria" published by Pergamon Press in 1981:

"Robert Maxwell: In a recent report (December 1980) the International Amnesty Organization made a point of improper attitude toward representatives of the Moslem minority in Bulgaria (Bulgarian Mohammedans and Turks made up 10 percent of the population) who have protected against cultural discrimination, for instance against the closing down of schools with Turkish language education. What is the present policy regarding the Muslim minority? The Pentecostals are another religious minority who, as some maintain, have had some troubles with the authorities.'

'Todor Jivkov: The Social Revolution dealt with questions of religion on entirely different principles. According to our present Constitution, they are separate from the state. Religion became the citizen's private affair. No privileges or restrictions in the rights based on nationality, origin, religion, sex, race, and so on are allowed. Under Article 52 of the Constitution, no citizen shall be persecuted or restricted in his or her civil and political rights, or relieved from fulfilling the obligations under the laws of the country, owing to the fact that he or she belongs to one or another religion or to no religion at all.

'In 1979, a trial was initiated in Sofia against a few protestant pastors--Pentecostals--and there was some uproar in certain Western countries over the alleged persecution of religion in Bulgaria. In actual fact, the Pastors were tried for various currency and customs offenses and violations of the laws. The trial was held with open doors and anybody who attended would have become convinced of the defendants' guilt. The very leaders of the 'Pentecost' Church condemned these acts as incompatible with their rank of Pastors.

'Moslem believers in Bulgaria (Bulgarian Turks and a small number of Bulgarian Mohammedans) form the second biggest faith. They are considered absolutely equal with all the remaining citizens of the Republic and are free to profess their faith. There are

more than 1,300 Mosques, 8 district Mufti offices with a Chief Mufti Office and 570 district Imams in Bulgaria. The state grants a regular annual subsidy to the Chief Mufti Office to add to its budget the clergy's support. Apart from this, the state takes care of the conservation and restoration of all monuments left from Ottoman times (Mosques, tombs, and so on) of architectural and historical value. This religious denomination, under the Seriyat Law, continues to possess and manage its own properties today, the income of which goes for religious purposes.

'The prayer homes--the Mosques--are open at any time and visited by believers to pray without any restrictions. Besides, the 'Yeni Isik' newspaper is published with a 20,000 circulation both in Bulgarian and Turkish in Bulgaria, and there is also the 'Yeni Hayat' magazine, also in Bulgarian and Turkish, with a circulation of 10,000. There are regular daily 4-hour broadcasts in the Turkish language on the Bulgarian radio. There are artistic ensembles with the state theatres in the towns of Shoumen, Kirdjali, and Razgard, which perform special 'Turkish programs,' dances, and so on. Classical works of Turkish literature and by contemporary Turkish authors are brought out here in Bulgarian and Turkish.

'The education of children of Bulgarian Turks is guaranteed by the Constitution and is effected under the law for people's education according to curricula and programs unified for Bulgaria. All children in the 7- to 16-year bracket who are to undergo the course of compulsory education are taught and educated after these programs. The 8th grade graduates are entitled to continue their education in all kinds of general education, special and vocational and technical secondary schools and then also in higher education establishments. This provides them with equal possibilities for training and work as specialists, and places them on equal footing with the remaining boys and girls.

'This is the reason why--by request of the very parents--Bulgarian Turks' optional study of the Turkish language from the first to the ninth grades has been adopted since the 1972-1973 school year. Special textbooks in the Turkish language and literature are published for this purpose. The children of Bulgarian Turks, like all the children in this country, receive free textbooks, school aids, and are included in semi-boarding houses, study rooms, boarding schools, and hostels.

'As far as the Bulgarian Mohammedans are concerned, being quite a few in number and living mainly in the Rhodope mountains, the believers among them profess Islam with the same freedom and equality and have their own clerics and Mosques. Ethnically, this population is purely Bulgarian, but was forced to adopt Islam during the Ottoman Yoke. Nowadays this part of the population keeps their Bulgarian names, quite voluntarily and by their own will, without detriment to the religious views of the believers among them.

'I hope to have given you a satisfactory answer. As for the data produced by the organization you referred to, I am not aware of from where they come.'

'Robert Maxwell: I will proceed with my next question. Why was emigration to Turkey obviously stopped?'

'Todor Jivkov: I believe you have in mind the moving of Bulgarian Turks from Bulgaria to Turkey.

'The joining of separated families and other conditions needing humane solving led in 1968 to the conclusion of the Bulgaro-Turkish agreement on partial emigration. As a result of its implementation a great number of Bulgarian Turks returned to Turkey to

their relatives over a span of ten years. One part of them, more than 10,000 people, who were entitled to emigrate under the Agreement, preferred to stay in the People's Republic of Bulgaria. In 1978, the two parties mutually agreed on the termination of the Agreement since its purpose was fulfilled.

'Therefore, to speak about emigration being 'stopped' is incorrect.'

* * *

Periodical report of the Bulgarian Government dated October 18, 1984 (CERD/C/118 ADD.17) submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination:

"...Also living in our country are Bulgarian citizens of Turkish, Gypsy, Armenian, Jewish, Greek, and other origins...The Penal Code (Article 165) prescribes for any person who by force or by threat hinders citizens from freely professing their religion or from engaging in religious rites and services...While the majority of Bulgarian nationality are Christians of the Eastern Orthodox Church, religious persons of Turkish and Gypsy origin (as well as Mohammedan Bulgarians) belong to Islam, while those of Jewish or Armenian origin profess Judaism or the Gregorian faith."

* * *

As can be seen from the above excerpts, it was only yesterday that the Bulgarian authorities were taking a contrary stand on the minority issue by admitting the fact that the Turkish minority exists in Bulgaria. Today, the regime is trying to defend just the opposite approach, declaring null and void its policy of yesterday. In speeches later published, several senior Bulgarian party officials, visiting areas with large numbers of ethnic Turks, made extremely sharp, intransigent statements about the Bulgarianization of ethnic Turks. According to them, there are no Turks in Bulgaria; those claiming to be ethnic Turks are, in fact, Bulgarians.

* * *

Statement by Mr. Dimitar Stanishev, Central Committee Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party, March 1985:

"There is and there will be no emigration of Bulgarian citizens to Turkey. No Bulgarian-Turkish negotiations on this question will be held. We shall not discuss it with any state, because there is not a single section of the Bulgarian people that belongs to another nation. You should all know that. This is the firm and unchangeable position of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and of its party and government leadership."

* * *

Statement by Mr. Dimitar Stoyanov, Bulgarian Politburo candidate, "Borba," March 9, 1985:

"All our fellow countrymen who reverted to their Bulgarian names are Bulgarians. They are the bone of the bone and the flesh of the flesh of the Bulgarian nation; although the Bulgarian national consciousness of some of them might still be blurred, they are of the same Bulgarian flesh and blood; they are children of the Bulgarian nation; they were forcibly torn away and now they are coming back home. There are no Turks in Bulgaria. The issue is closed."

ANNEX IVa

NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 168
ADOPTED BY THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE ON THE
REPRESSION OF THE TURKISH MINORITY
IN BULGARIA, OCTOBER 12, 1985

The Assembly,

Noting the provisions of the Neuilly Treaty of 1919, the Friendship Pact between Bulgaria and Turkey on 18 October 1925 and also the provisions of the Paris Peace Treaty of 10 February 1947 to which Bulgaria is party, and as such recognized the minority status of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, nearly two million people whose fathers settled there since the end of the 14th century;

Impressed with the courage and determination of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria to defend their names and religious beliefs;

Aware that following difficult negotiations and upon the invitation of the Turkish government the Bulgarian government finally permitted some 152,000 Turks to leave Bulgaria and to resettle in Turkey in 1950-50, and a further mass migration of 130,000 was also realized following the agreement in 1968 between Turkey and Bulgaria;

Condemns strongly the brutal acts of violence and systematic suppression perpetrated by the Bulgarian authorities against the Turkish minority in Bulgaria whose Turkish names are being changed into Bulgarian ones against their will and who are prevented from performing their religious rites;

Deplores the actions of the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria as a signatory of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, in particular the provisions of Chapter VII of the same and the Madrid Concluding Document which she has systematically violated since December 1984, and oppresses the Turkish minority in Bulgaria with threats, beatings, murders, fines, denial of government services, dismissal from jobs, and blocking of bank accounts;

Condemns the actions of the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria which refuses to permit journalists and foreign diplomats to visit the areas where violence occurred purporting to deny such events;

Convinced that the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria could agree with the welcome proposal of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey and negotiate with them on the question of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, to provide their repatriation to Turkey in compliance with their wishes, so that respect for their human rights is guaranteed and the problem can be solved peacefully;

1. URGES member governments of the North Atlantic Alliance to continue to attach importance to the problem and their international efforts, to exert pressure through every possible means, until the Bulgarian authorities reverse their decision so that the forced "Bulgarization" policy of brutal repression and assassinations of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria is prevented;
2. REMAINS CONSCIOUS of the question of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria until the question is solved.

ANNEX IVb

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF
THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, SEPTEMBER 26, 1985**

The Assembly,

1. Considering the right of members of ethnic minorities to enjoy their own culture, to profess and exercise their religion, to speak their own language, to keep their traditions and customs and to preserve their national and cultural identity;
2. Recalling that these fundamental human rights are guaranteed in particular by the Helsinki Final Act and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
3. Considering the obligation of Contracting Parties to respect the rights embodied in international agreements, and to guarantee the benefit of such rights to all persons coming under their control and jurisdiction;
4. Concerned by alarming reports that members of the ethnic and Moslem minorities in Bulgaria are being deprived of the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and exercise their religion, and to speak their own language;
5. Concerned by information that the Bulgarian authorities, in their attempt at complete assimilation of the Turkish minority, have undertaken a systematic campaign in order to force the members of this minority to adopt Bulgarian names;
6. Concerned by information about acts of violence committed by Bulgarian security forces in carrying out this campaign;
7. Regretting that the Bulgarian authorities do not allow the international press to send journalists into the areas where such incidents are said to be taking place;
8. Calls on the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria:
 - a. to put an immediate end to this repressive policy and to restore their rightful names to all members of the Turkish minority who have been obliged to change them by threat or by force;
 - b. to put an end to the violation of the rights of members of the ethnic and Moslem minorities in Bulgaria in social, cultural, and religious matters;
 - c. to allow the members of these minorities to enjoy fully the rights stipulated in international agreements and in the Bulgarian Constitution; and
 - d. to allow journalists of the international press as well as diplomats accredited in Bulgaria to visit the areas concerned;
9. Invites the governments of the council of Europe member states to support these demands in their contacts with the Bulgarian government and within the framework of the Helsinki process; and
10. Authorizes the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with European Non-Member States and his Rapporteur to visit the areas concerned and to report back to the Committee the results of their findings for its further consideration.

ANNEX IVc

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE SIXTEENTH ISLAMIC CONFERENCE
OF FOREIGN MINISTERS, FEZ, MOROCCO, JANUARY 6 & 10, 1986**

The sixteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Fez, Kingdom of Morocco, from Rabiul Thani 25-29 1406 H (6-10 January 1986).

Having considered the item entitled "Plight of the Turkish-Muslim Minority in Bulgaria;"

Taking also into consideration the recommendation of the Permanent Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs at its last session held in Dakar between 31 October and 2 November 1985;

Considering the right of religious minorities in non-Muslim countries to enjoy their own culture, to profess and exercise their own religion, to speak and teach their own language, to keep their own traditions and customs and to preserve their religious and cultural identity;

Inspired by the principles and objectives of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the resolutions adopted by the OIC regarding the situation of the Muslim minorities living in non-Muslim countries, as well as those of the United Nations Charter and other international agreements and conventions which guarantee these rights;

Deeply concerned by alarming reports that the Muslim minority in Bulgaria is subjected to a coercive assimilation campaign, in violation of their minority rights and status guaranteed by international and bilateral treaties;

1. Expresses its solidarity with the Muslim minority of Bulgaria;
2. Strongly urges member countries of the OIC to seek the necessary political solutions, with a view to:
 - a. Ensuring that the religious and cultural rights of the Muslim minority and the rightful names of the members of the said minority are fully restored;
 - b. Obtaining permission for the international and Islamic press to have access to the areas where incidents have taken place;
 - c. Helping preserve the religious identify and cultural heritage of the Muslim minority in Bulgaria;
 - d. Supporting these demands in their bilateral and multilateral contacts with the People's Republic of Bulgaria;
3. Entrusts the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic conference with the task of appointing a three member contact group composed of eminent personalities to examine the conditions of the Muslim minority in Bulgaria, to make whatever contacts it deems necessary for this purpose and to make recommendations with a view to facilitating a political solution to this tragic problem within the provision prescribed in the previous paragraph and in the context of relevant international conventions and treaties, in particular the International Convention on Human Rights;

4. Calls upon the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to follow the plight of the Muslim minority in Bulgaria and to present a comprehensive report to the next meeting of the foreign ministers of the OIC;
5. Expresses the hope that, in the light of its relations with the Islamic world, the government of Bulgaria may provide the best possible opportunity to the OIC to examine this matter;
6. Decides to keep the matter on the agenda.

ANNEX V

99th CONGRESS, 1st SESSION - H.J.RES.262

**CONDEMNING THE BRUTAL TREATMENT OF, AND BLATANT DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST THE TURKISH MINORITY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 25, 1985

**Mr. Siljander introduced the following joint resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs**

JOINT RESOLUTION

Condemning the brutal treatment of, and blatant discrimination against the Turkish minority by the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Whereas the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria is a signatory to the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights by the United Nations and to the Helsinki Declaration of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe of August 1, 1975, thereby solemnly undertaking the obligation not to discriminate against its citizens on the basis of race and national origin;

Whereas the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria has never abrogated the post-World War I international agreements on the protection of national minorities, including the Neuilly-sur-Seine agreement of November 27, 1923, or the October 18, 1925 Bulgarian-Turkish Friendship Pact, all of which guaranteed equal rights and nondiscrimination to the Turkish minority in Bulgaria;

Whereas the 1971 Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria accepts equality before the law and declares that fundamental rights will not be restricted because of distinction of national origin, race or religion and in Article 48 guarantees the right to study in the mother tongue, and in Article 53 provides for the free practice of religion;

Whereas the approximately one million Turkish minority residents in Bulgaria settled there at the end of the fourteenth century and have lived there uninterruptedly ever since;

Whereas flagrant discrimination in regard to the quality of employment and promotion, to visits to relatives abroad, to free travel and even in regard to the repair of houses and Mosques, has been inflicted on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria for many years;

Whereas the repression of Turkish language and culture by the authorities of the People's Republic of Bulgaria includes rendering the study of the Turkish language impossible; interference with the use of the Turkish language by the Turkish minority in public; making the receipt and reading of Turkish publications a punishable act, and jamming the reception of Turkish radio and television programs in Bulgaria;

Whereas the Bulgarian authorities, especially since December 1984, are engaged in a nationwide campaign to force the Turkish minority to change their Turkish names to Bulgarian ones;

Whereas the Bulgarian authorities, especially since December 1984, have oppressed the Turkish minority with threats, beatings, fines, delays and denials of services in government offices, blockings of bank accounts, dismissals from jobs, and in the murder of hundreds of Turkish protesters by Bulgarian militia in the countryside;

Whereas the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria continues to refuse to permit journalists and foreign diplomats to visit the areas where violence has occurred, insisting in press releases that such events did not take place; and

Whereas the right to practice their Islamic religion has also been severely restricted and some Mosques closed by the authorities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That they strongly condemn the brutal treatment of, and blatant discrimination against the Turkish minority by the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, and calls upon the President to convey this condemnation of actions by their government, contravening international treaties signed by the same, and to make the strongest diplomatic representations to Bulgaria in this regard; and be it further,

Resolved, That the House of Representatives (with the Senate concurring) calls upon the President to raise this issue in all appropriate international fora.

ANNEX VI

EXCERPTS FROM THE STATEMENTS BY
THE UNITED STATES OFFICIALSDepartment of State Press Guidance, April 2, 1985:

"We have seen many reports from various sources of such a campaign, including reports of numerous deaths among those ethnic Turks opposed to the loss of their national identity. We have found many of the reports difficult to verify, particularly since certain areas of Bulgaria where the Turkish minority is concentrated have been closed from time to time to outsiders, including our Embassy officers in Sofia. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that Bulgarian authorities have undertaken a concerted denationalization campaign. Bulgarian police and military have at various places and times engaged in a gunpoint program to coerce members of the Turkish minority to apply 'voluntarily' to give up their Turkish identities and assume Slavic style names. In some cases, troops supported by tanks have surrounded entire villages, transporting the inhabitants to central administrative centers for renaming. There are also reliable reports that some resisters have been summarily shot.

"Other repressive measures have been reported as well. All Bulgarian government supported Turkish language radio broadcasts have ceased. Turkish language newspapers have ceased to be printed. The government of Bulgaria appears determined to denationalize ethnic and cultural distinctions of the 1,000,000 strong Turkish-speaking population inside its borders.

"Although a signatory of the Helsinki Agreement, the government of Bulgaria considers this denationalization campaign to be strictly an internal matter. We cannot agree. Bulgaria's actions constitute a violation of the basic human rights of the Turkish minority. We will continue to express our concerns in bilateral contacts with the Bulgarian government and to take every opportunity to focus international attention on this serious matter."

* * *

Statement by Mr. Richard D. Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, before the Subcommittee on European Affairs, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, November 14, 1985:

"The most recent large-scale, and violent, attack on religion in Eastern Europe began last fall with Bulgaria's campaign to eradicate the identity of the country's ethnic Turkish population. About one million people, approximately ten percent of the entire population, were suddenly told that they were not in fact Turks, that they had to change their names to Slavic names, stop speaking Turkish, stop wearing Turkish clothing, and stop performing most Islamic religious customs. Many who resisted were killed and many more were imprisoned. Most Mosques in the country have been closed, converted to museums, or turned into various types of secular structures. Few Moslem religious leaders remain, and the training of new ones has effectively been halted. Religious rites essential to the conduct of Islam have been banned, including circumcision, marriage, and funeral rites. The pilgrimage to Mecca has in practice ceased to occur."

* * *

Remarks of U.S. President Reagan at the Signing Ceremony for International Human Rights Day, December 10, 1985:

...While in Bulgaria, the repression of the Turkish minority and the Islamic faith are witness to the unyielding denial of the basic freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion in its region."

"We have seen many reports from various sources of such a campaign, including reports of numerous deaths. Among those ethnic groups opposed to the loss of their national identity. We have found many of the reports difficult to verify, particularly since certain areas of Bulgaria where the Turkish minority is concentrated have been closed from time to time to outsiders, including our Embassy officers in Sofia. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that Bulgarian authorities have conducted a concerted denationalization campaign. Bulgarian police and military units at various places and times engaged in a roundup program to remove members of the Turkish minority, forcibly removing them to give up their Turkish language and Islamic faith. In some cases, those who refused to leave have been arrested and held in villages. The denationalization campaign has been particularly directed at the Turkish population inside its borders."

"Although a signatory of the Helsinki Agreement, the government of Bulgaria considers this denationalization campaign to be strictly an internal matter. We cannot agree. Bulgaria's actions constitute a violation of the basic human rights of the Turkish minority. We will continue to express our concerns in bilateral contacts with the Bulgarian government and to take every opportunity to focus international attention on this serious matter."

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